



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

FY 2021 Competitive Funding Opportunity: Enhancing Mobility Innovation

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces the opportunity to apply for a total of \$2,000,000 in competitive cooperative agreement awards in fiscal year (FY) 2021 funds for projects that enhance mobility innovations for transit. Funds will be awarded competitively for projects that advance emerging technologies, strategies and innovations in passenger-centric mobility in two distinct areas. Of the total available funds, \$1,000,000 is available to accelerate innovative mobility and is for projects to improve mobility and enhance the rider experience with a focus on innovative service delivery models, creative financing, novel partnerships, and integrated payment solutions; and \$1,000,000 is available for projects to support the development of software solutions that facilitate the provision of integrated demand-response public transportation service that dispatches public transportation fleet vehicles through riders mobile devices or other means. Projects will be competitively selected based on criteria outlined in this notice. FTA may award additional funding that is made available to the program prior to the announcement of project selections.

DATES: Complete proposals must be submitted electronically through the GRANTS.GOV “APPLY” function by 11:59 PM Eastern time on **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

Prospective applicants should initiate the process by registering on the GRANTS.GOV website promptly to ensure completion of the application process before the submission deadline. Instructions for applying can be found on FTA’s website at <http://www.transit.dot.gov/howtoapply> and in the “FIND” module of GRANTS.GOV. The

funding opportunity ID is FTA-2021-010-TRI-EMI. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christina Gikakis, FTA Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation, 202-366-2637, christina.gikakis@dot.gov.

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A. Program Description

Under FTA's Public Transportation Innovation Program (49 U.S.C. 5312), FTA may make grants, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements, for research, development, demonstration, and deployment projects of national significance to public transportation agencies that the Secretary determines will improve public transportation service. This NOFO (Federal Assistance Listing: 20.530) has been developed under this authority. As directed by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260), FTA will competitively fund up to \$1,000,000 in cooperative agreements to accelerate innovations that improve mobility and enhance the rider experience, and will competitively fund up to \$1,000,000 in cooperative agreements for the development of software solutions to facilitate demand-response public transportation.

This NOFO implements the provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, by seeking targeted projects that advance emerging technologies, strategies and innovations in passenger-centric mobility, in these two distinct areas: (a) to develop novel operational concepts and/or demonstrate innovations that improve mobility and enhance the rider experience, with a focus on innovative service delivery models, creative financing, novel partnerships, and integrated payment solutions; and (b) to support the development of software solutions that facilitate the provision of demand-response public transportation service that dispatches public transportation fleet vehicles, through riders mobility devices or other advanced means.

This effort also supports the President's promotion of increased access to transit for environmental justice populations and adoption of equity-focused policies. This NOFO will advance the goals of Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

These research efforts will build upon significant FTA and private sector investments in mobility innovation through efforts such as the Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox, the Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI) Program and the Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) Challenge Grant Initiative, as well as others. These research efforts will advance a vision for mobility that leverages innovative technologies, practices, and novel partnerships to provide safe, reliable, equitable, accessible, carefree and seamless mobility for all travelers. To that end, this notice seeks projects that can advance innovative technologies, practices, approaches or service models that produce climate smart and equitable mobility outcomes, knowledge of national significance; and/or robust, interoperable software-based solutions for innovative mobility services.

FTA will competitively award cooperative agreements to eligible applicants for projects to either advance mobility innovations or to develop software solutions for public transportation services, as described in this notice.

B. Federal Award Information

This notice makes available a total of \$2 million for cooperative agreements as authorized under the Public Transportation Innovation Program, 49 U.S.C. 5312(b), to support the research, development, demonstration, and deployment and evaluation of research and technology of national significance to transit, that the Secretary determines will improve transit. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. 116-260, appropriated up to \$1,000,000 for competitive awards to develop novel operational concepts and/or demonstrate innovations that improve mobility and enhance the rider experience, with a focus on innovative service delivery models, creative financing, novel partnerships, and integrated payment solutions; and up to \$1,000,000 for the development of software to facilitate the provision of demand-response public transportation service that dispatches public transportation fleet vehicles, through riders mobile devices or other advanced means. Additional funds made available prior to project selection may be allocated to eligible projects.

To ensure the most impactful projects for each project area, FTA is seeking projects that require a minimum award amount of \$250,000 with maximum award of \$1,000,000. Due to funding limitations, applicants that are selected for funding may receive less than the amount originally requested. Only proposals from eligible recipients for eligible activities will be considered for funding.

Pre-award authority is subject to FTA approval and is only available for costs incurred after the announcement of project selections on FTA's website.

Projects under this competition are for research and development efforts and, as such, FTA Research Circular 6100.1E (available at <https://www.fta.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/fta-circulars/research-technical-assistance-and-training-program>) guidance will apply in administering the program.

An applicant whose proposal is selected for funding will receive a cooperative agreement award with FTA to be administered according to Circular 6100.1E, and as set

forth in 31 U.S.C. 6305. FTA will have substantial involvement in the administration of the cooperative agreement. FTA's role includes the right to participate in decisions to redirect and reprioritize project activities, goals, and deliverables.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants under this notice include the following:

- Providers of public transportation, including public transportation agencies, state or local government DOTs, and federally recognized Indian tribes;
- Private for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, including shared-use mobility providers, private operators of transportation services, technology system suppliers and integrators, bus or vehicle manufacturers or suppliers, software and technology developers, financial institutions, consultants, research consortia, and industry organizations;
- State, city or local government entities, including multi-jurisdictional partnerships, and organizations such as Metropolitan Planning Organizations; or
- Institutions of higher education including large research universities, particularly those with Minority Serving Institution status.

On the application form, eligible applicants are encouraged to identify one or more project partners with a substantial interest and involvement in the project to participate in the implementation of the project.

If an application that involves such a partnership is selected for funding, the competitive selection process will be deemed to satisfy the requirement for a competitive procurement under 49 U.S.C. 5325(a) for the named entities. Applicants are advised that any changes to the proposed partnership will require FTA written approval, must be consistent with the scope of the approved project, and may necessitate a competitive procurement.

The applicant must be able to carry out the proposed agreement and procurements, if needed, with project partners in compliance with all applicable Federal, state, and local laws. To be considered eligible, applicants must be able to demonstrate the requisite legal, financial, and technical capabilities to receive and administer Federal funds under this program.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

The maximum Federal share of project costs under this program is limited to 80 percent. Applicants may seek a lower Federal contribution. The applicant must provide the non-Federal share of the net project cost in cash, or in-kind, and must document in its application the source of the non-Federal match. Eligible sources of non-Federal match are detailed in FTA Circular 6100.1E.

3. Eligible Projects

This notice solicits applications in two topical areas: (a) projects that develop novel operational concepts and/or demonstrate innovations that improve mobility and enhance the rider experience, with focus on innovative service delivery models, creative financing, novel partnerships, and integrated payment solutions, or other innovative solutions; and (b) projects that develop software to facilitate the provision of demand-response public transportation service that dispatches public transportation fleet vehicles, through riders' mobile devices or other advanced means.

Applicants must clearly indicate on the supplemental form the topical area for which the application is seeking funding.

This effort seeks to harness Federal, local, and private sector investments in transportation and mobility innovations. As such, FTA seeks applications for projects that enhance the current state of mobility innovation research or build on existing successful projects and partnership efforts.

For illustrative purposes, some examples of project research areas include: novel data approaches for improved service delivery; data-driven tools to predict and influence traveler

behavior; data-driven strategies that balance mobility options to travelers with climate smart choices; next generation replicable seamless payments systems and solutions that can enhance integrated mobility management and operations across a variety of modes; new, smarter business models for providing more effective transportation and mobility options in underserved communities; use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to personalize mobility options to travelers; mobility payment integration with dynamic pricing strategies; and public private partnerships with non-traditional transportation providers.

For topical area (a), concepts development and/or demonstration projects, eligible activities may include all activities leading to uncovering the next iteration of promising technologies, practices and strategies to accelerate innovations in mobility for transit, including, but not limited to, planning, acquiring essential equipment or services, project implementation, and evaluating project results. The purchase of a vehicle that will be used for revenue service with research funds is prohibited unless the project makes significant technological advancements in the vehicle.

For projects that develop novel operational concepts without demonstration, eligible project activities may include data collection, technology scanning and feasibility analysis, stakeholder engagement and outreach, benefits and costs analysis, and modeling forecast of climate and equity impacts of proposed novel concepts.

For topical area (b) software development projects, eligible activities may include establishing user needs; defining system requirements; development, validation and verification of the software; modeling and simulation; and/or pilot implementation, with a software solution that can be demonstrated to FTA. Software products developed will be subject to the provisions of FTA's Master Agreement (version 28, February 9, 2021) available at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2021-02/FTA-Master-Agreement-v28-2021-02-09.pdf> and may be disseminated to public transit agencies for their use. Software developed under this program should be interoperable, adaptable, secure, and able to be seamlessly

integrated into other transportation and transit management systems. Further the project team should consider how the development effort could support the development or use of open standards, specifications or protocols. FTA will evaluate the potential for software developed under this NOFO to be shared for use by public transportation agencies.

It is FTA's intent to advance innovations that are of national significance and can provide benefit to transit agencies, cities and communities across the United States. As such, project teams should consider how to structure development efforts to ensure the resulting research outputs are broadly relevant and can lead to adoption or use by other transit agencies or transportation providers.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application

Applications must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV. General information for submitting applications through GRANTS.GOV can be found at www.transit.dot.gov/howtoapply. A complete proposal submission consists of two forms: the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (available at GRANTS.GOV) and the supplemental form for the FY 2021 Mobility Innovation NOFO (downloaded from GRANTS.GOV or the FTA website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/EMI>). Failure to submit the information as requested can delay review or disqualify the application.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

a. Proposal Submission

A complete proposal submission consists of two forms: (1) the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance; and (2) the supplemental form for the FY 2021 Enhancing Mobility Innovation NOFO. The supplemental form and any supporting documents must be attached to the "Attachments" section of the SF-424. The application must include responses to all sections of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and the supplemental form, unless indicated as optional. The information on the supplemental form will be used to determine

applicant and project eligibility for the program, and to evaluate the proposal against the selection criteria described in Section E of this notice. If an applicant chooses to apply for both topical areas ((a) concepts development and/or demonstration, and (b) software development), the applicant must submit separate proposals for individual consideration by FTA, with a separate SF-424 and supplemental form for each project area.

FTA will accept only one supplemental form per SF-424 submission. Applicants may attach additional supporting information to the SF-424 submission, including but not limited to letters of support, project budgets, visual aids, excerpts from relevant planning documents, or project narratives. Any supporting documentation must be described and referenced by file name in the appropriate response section of the supplemental form, or it may not be reviewed.

Information such as applicant name, Federal amount requested, local match amount, and description of areas served may be requested in varying degrees of detail on both the SF-424 and supplemental form. Applicants must fill in all fields unless stated otherwise on the forms. If information is copied into the supplemental form from another source, applicants should verify that pasted text is fully captured on the supplemental form and has not been truncated by the character limits built into the form. Applicants should use both the “Check Package for Errors” and the “Validate Form” validation buttons on both forms to check all required fields on the forms and ensure that the Federal and local amounts specified are consistent.

b. Application Content

The SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and the supplemental form will prompt applicants for the required information, including:

1. Applicant name.
2. Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.
3. Key contact information (including name, address, email address, and phone).

4. Congressional district(s) where the project will take place.
5. Project information (including title, an executive summary, and type).
6. Information on areas served by the project including current state of public transportation and state of mobility in the area served.
7. A detailed description of the project and how it will either (a) advance innovative mobility technologies that focus on innovative service delivery models, creative financing, novel partnerships, and integrated payment solutions, or other innovative solutions; or (b) develop interoperable software solutions to facilitate the provision of demand-response public transportation service.
8. A description of each innovative technology, practice or strategy proposed as part of the project scope.
9. A description of the national significance of the project to advance innovative, carefree mobility solutions.
10. A description of how the project may advance climate smart solutions and equity.
11. Information on any project partners, their role, and anticipated contributions.
12. A description of the project implementation strategy.
13. A description of the approach to data, data access and project evaluation, including how the project will support the Department of Transportation's public data access requirements.
14. A description of the technical, legal, and financial capacity of the applicant and partners.
15. A detailed project budget, specifying Federal and local share.
16. A description of the scalability of the project.
17. A detailed project timeline.

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to: (1) be registered in SAM before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which the applicant has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by FTA. FTA may not make an award until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time FTA is ready to make an award, FTA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant. These requirements do not apply if the applicant has an exception approved by FTA or the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under 2 CFR 25.110(c) or (d). Non-Federal entities that have received a Federal award are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) to ensure registration information is current and comply with Federal requirements. Applicants should reference 2 CFR 200.113, for more information. SAM registration takes approximately 3-5 business days, but FTA recommends allowing ample time, up to several weeks, for completion of all steps. For additional information on obtaining a unique entity identifier, please visit <https://www.sam.gov>.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Project proposals must be submitted electronically through GRANTS.GOV by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**. GRANTS.GOV attaches a time stamp to each application at the time of submission. Proposals submitted after the deadline will only be considered under extraordinary circumstances not under the applicant's control. Mail and fax submissions will not be accepted.

FTA urges applicants to submit applications at least 72 hours prior to the due date to allow time to receive the validation messages and to correct any problems that may have caused a rejection notification. GRANTS.GOV scheduled maintenance and outage times are announced on the GRANTS.GOV website. Deadlines will not be extended due to scheduled website maintenance.

Within 48 hours after submitting an electronic application, the applicant should receive an email message from GRANTS.GOV with confirmation of successful transmission to GRANTS.GOV. If a notice of failed validation or incomplete materials is received, the applicant must address the reason for the failed validation, as described in the email notice, and resubmit before the submission deadline. If making a resubmission for any reason, include all original attachments regardless of which attachments were updated and check the box on the supplemental form indicating this is a resubmission.

Applicants are encouraged to begin the process of registration on the GRANTS.GOV site well in advance of the submission deadline. Registration is a multi-step process, which may take several weeks to complete before an application can be submitted. Registered applicants may still be required to take steps to keep their registration up to date before submissions can be made successfully: (1) registration in SAM must be renewed annually, and (2) persons making submissions on behalf of the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) must be authorized in GRANTS.GOV by the AOR to make submission.

5. Funding Restrictions

Funds available under this NOFO cannot be used to reimburse applicants for otherwise eligible expenses incurred prior to FTA issuing pre-award authority for selected projects.

Refer to Section C.3., Eligible Projects, for information on activities that are allowable. Allowable direct and indirect expenses must be consistent with the

Governmentwide Uniform Administrative Requirements and Cost Principles (2 CFR part 200) and FTA Circular 5010.1E.

6. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants are encouraged to identify scaled funding options in case insufficient funding is available to fund a project at the full requested amount. If an applicant indicates that a project is scalable, the applicant must provide an appropriate minimum funding amount that will fund an eligible project that achieves the objectives of the program and meets all relevant program requirements. The applicant must provide a clear explanation of how the project budget would be affected by a reduced award. FTA may award a lesser amount regardless of whether a scalable option is provided.

All applications must be submitted via the GRANTS.GOV website. FTA does not accept applications on paper, by fax machine, email, or other means. For information on application submission requirements, please see Section D.1., Address to Request Application. If the applicant encounters system problems or technical difficulties using the Grants.gov website, the applicant should address those technical issues to Grants.gov.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria

Projects will be evaluated primarily on the responses provided in the supplemental form. Additional information may be provided to support the responses; however, any additional documentation must be directly referenced on the supplemental form, including the file name where the additional information can be found. FTA will evaluate proposals based on the criteria described in this notice.

If an applicant is proposing to deploy autonomous vehicles or other innovative motor vehicle technology, the application should demonstrate that all vehicles will comply with applicable safety requirements, including those administered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

Specifically, the application should show that vehicles acquired for the proposed project will comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSR). If the vehicles do not comply, the application should either (1) show that the vehicles and their proposed operations are within the scope of an exemption or waiver that has already been granted by NHTSA, FMCSA, or both agencies, or (2) directly address whether the project will require exemptions or waivers from the FMVSS, FMCSR, or any other regulation and, if the project will require exemptions or waivers, present a plan for obtaining them.

a. Demonstration of Innovation

FTA is seeking projects focused on the next iteration of the most promising technologies, practices, and strategies to accelerate innovations in mobility for transit. Projects will be evaluated on the extent to which they develop and deploy novel, innovative, or transformative mobility technologies and solutions, and advance the state of the practice. A proposal should clearly identify a specific innovative premise which serves a need, the proposed project approach to addressing the need, and how the proposed project will provide outcomes or new insights that expand the public transportation industry's understanding of mobility innovation. FTA will assess the extent to which the applicant uses innovative strategies, including (i) innovative technologies, (ii) innovative financing, or (iii) innovative operations to address specific needs in the area of mobility innovation that can produce climate smart and equitable mobility outcomes and knowledge.

b. Demonstration of Benefits

The application should demonstrate the utility of the proposed project to accelerate the transit industry's ability to implement new technologies, operational innovations, approaches or service models that support safe, equitable, and climate-smart mobility options for all travelers. FTA will evaluate proposals based on their capacity to accelerate the development and adoption of innovative technologies, practices, and service models to improve mobility and enhance the

rider experience, better position transit agencies to adapt to unprecedented operational challenges, and to meet evolving traveler expectations.

FTA will consider the extent to which each proposal explores innovative technologies, practices, approaches or service models that produce outcomes and knowledge of national significance and advance the state of the practice for public transportation in the United States; advances technologies, innovations, practices or partnership models that resonate with all transit agencies; leverages private sector innovation; advances robust, replicable business models, and sustainable public private partnerships; and advances tools or approaches that can enable transportation system carbon reductions and promote equity.

FTA welcomes integrated mobility projects that embrace a holistic view of multimodal mobility, with public transportation as the backbone, and includes equitable movements of people and goods into consideration. FTA also encourages applicants to consider integrated mobility from the perspectives of system owners, operators, as well as users. FTA seeks projects to produce novel, bold and yet realistic concepts to accelerate the transformation of integrated mobility, including public transportation, influencing traveler behavior, and producing meaningful and lasting impacts on climate and equity goals. Please see Section E.2, Review and Selection Process for more information about the Executive Orders.

For software development projects, FTA will consider the extent to which the development results in robust, interoperable, and adaptable software-based solutions for demand-response transit service dispatched through riders' mobile device or other advanced means. Additionally, software development projects will be assessed on the extent to which the development effort will support strategies for use of open standards, specifications, or protocols and would permit the software to be shared for use by public transportation agencies.

c. Planning and Partnerships

Applicants must identify all project partners and their specific roles. FTA will evaluate the extent to which the project contains strong, cohesive partnerships and the collaboration

necessary to successfully implement the proposed project. Applications should describe how project partners plan to work collaboratively and should show evidence of strong commitment and cooperation among project partners through letters of support or agreements among the partners. Applications should describe how partners will participate in each aspect of project planning, implementation and evaluation. FTA will also evaluate the experience, capacity, and demonstrated partnership commitment of the named project partners as pertains to successful implementation of the proposed project. Applicants are advised to submit information on the partners' qualifications and experience as a part of the application.

Entities who will be involved in the project but not named in the application will be required to be selected through a competitive procurement.

d. Local Financial Commitment

Applicants must identify the source of the non-Federal cost share and describe whether such funds are currently available for the project or will need to be secured if the project is selected for funding. FTA will consider the availability of the non-Federal cost share as evidence of the applicant's financial commitment to the project. Additional consideration may be given to those projects with a higher non-Federal share of costs and for which non-Federal funds have already been made available or reserved. Applicants should submit evidence of the availability of funds for the project, for example, by including a board resolution, letter of support from the State, a budget document highlighting the line item or section committing funds to the proposed project, or other documentation of the source of non-Federal funds.

e. Project Implementation Strategy

Projects will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant's proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete. In assessing whether the proposed implementation plans are reasonable and complete, FTA will review the proposed project implementation plan, including all necessary project milestones and the overall project timeline. FTA will consider if the project's implementation strategy addresses how the project will support FTA's independent

project evaluation efforts, data access and sharing of project results and project evaluation against mobility-specific metrics. For projects that will require formal coordination, approvals or permits from government agencies or project partners, the applicant must demonstrate coordination with these organizations and their support for the project, such as through letters of support. FTA will also consider the risks to project implementation, and the extent to which the project implementation strategy addresses these risks.

f. Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity

FTA will evaluate proposals on the capacity of the project applicant and any partners to successfully execute the project. Demonstrated experience by the project applicant or project partners in successfully implementing a mobility innovation development and demonstration project will be considered.

FTA may review relevant oversight assessments and records to determine whether there are any outstanding legal, technical or financial issues with the applicant that would affect the outcome of the proposed project. Applicants with outstanding legal, technical or financial compliance issues from an FTA compliance review or Federal Transit grant-related Single Audit finding must explain how corrective actions will mitigate negative impacts on the proposed project.

For applications that include named project partners, FTA will also consider the technical, legal and financial capacity of the partner to successfully implement the proposed project. Applicants are advised to submit information on the partners' qualifications and experience as a part of the application.

2. Review and Selection Process

A technical evaluation committee will evaluate proposals based on the published evaluation criteria. Members of the technical evaluation committee may request additional information from applicants, if necessary. Based on the findings of the technical evaluation committee, FTA will determine the final selection of projects for funding.

After applying the above criteria, in support of the President's January 20, 2021, Executive Order 13900, *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*, FTA will consider the extent to which applications may provide air quality benefits as part of the application review. Applicants should identify any nonattainment or maintenance areas under the Clean Air Act in the proposed service area. Nonattainment or maintenance areas should be limited to the following applicable National Ambient Air Quality Standards criteria pollutants: carbon monoxide, ozone, and particulate matter 2.5 and 10. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Green Book (available at <https://www.epa.gov/green-book>) is a publicly-available resource for nonattainment and maintenance area data. This consideration will further the goals of the Executive Order, including the goal to prioritize environmental justice (EJ).

In addition, FTA will consider benefits to EJ communities when reviewing applications received under this program. Applicants should identify any EJ populations located within the proposed service area and describe anticipated benefits to EJ populations should the applicant receive an award under this NOFO. A formal EJ analysis that is typically included in transportation planning or environmental reviews is not requested.

In support of Executive Order 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, FTA will also consider the extent to which applications promote racial equity and the removal of barriers to opportunity through such activities as equity-focused community outreach and public engagement of underserved communities, and adoption of an equity and inclusion program or plan or equity-focused policies related to the proposed project.

In determining the allocation of program funds, FTA may consider geographic diversity, diversity in the size of the grant recipients receiving funding, or the applicant's receipt of other competitive awards, among other factors. FTA may also consider capping the amount a single applicant may receive.

Prior to making an award, FTA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the FAPIIS accessible through SAM. An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. FTA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in the Office of Management and Budget's Uniform Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200.205).

F. Federal Award Administration Information

1. Federal Award Notices

FTA will announce the final project selections on the FTA website. Due to funding limitations, applicants that are selected for funding may receive less than the amount originally requested. In those cases, applicants must be able to demonstrate that the proposed projects are still viable and can be completed with the amount awarded.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

a. Pre-Award Authority

At the time the project selections are announced, FTA may extend pre-award authority for the selected projects. There is no blanket pre-award authority for these projects before announcement. FTA will issue specific guidance to recipients regarding pre-award authority at the time of selection. FTA does not consider requests for pre-award authority for competitive funds until after projects are selected, and additional Federal requirements must be met before costs are incurred. For more information about FTA's policy on pre-award authority, please see the most recent Apportionments, Allocations and Program Information Notice at <https://www.transit.dot.gov>.

b. Cooperative Agreement Requirements

If selected, awardees will apply for a cooperative agreement through FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). Successful applicants must be prepared to submit a complete statement of work and application in TrAMS within 90 days of notification of award. All recipients must follow the requirements of FTA Circular 6100.1E. Technical assistance regarding these requirements is available from FTA.

c. Buy America

FTA requires that all capital procurements meet FTA's Buy America requirements (49 U.S.C. 5323(j) and 49 CFR part 661), which require that all iron, steel, or manufactured goods be produced in the United States, and set minimum domestic content and final assembly requirements for rolling stock.

d. Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

FTA requires that its recipients receiving planning, capital, or operating assistance that will award prime contracts exceeding \$250,000 in FTA funds in a Federal fiscal year comply with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program regulations (49 CFR part 26). If an applicant also receives FTA planning, capital, or operating assistance, it should expect to include any funds awarded, excluding those to be used for vehicle procurements, in setting its overall DBE goal. Note, however, that projects, including vehicle procurements, remain subject to the DBE program regulations.

e. Standard Assurances

If an applicant receives an award, the applicant must assure that it will comply with all applicable Federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, directives, FTA circulars, and other Federal administrative requirements in carrying out any project supported by the FTA award. The applicant acknowledges that it will be under a continuing obligation to comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement issued for its project with FTA. The applicant understands that Federal laws, regulations, policies, and administrative practices might be

modified from time to time and may affect the implementation of the project. The most recent Federal requirements will apply to the project, unless FTA issues a written determination otherwise. The applicant must submit the most recent FTA Certifications and Assurances before receiving an award if it does not have current certifications on file.

f. Data Access and Data Sharing

FTA seeks to improve public transportation for America's communities by sharing digital data or source code collected or developed through its research with the public. This allows research organizations, transit agencies, and other stakeholders to learn from and expand upon the insights developed from FTA-funded research.

An award made pursuant to this NOFO will be subject to the latest version of FTA's Master Agreement (available at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grantee-resources/sample-fta-agreements/fta-grant-agreements>), including Section 17 Patent Rights and Section 18 Rights in Data and Copyrights.

All work funded under this NOFO must follow the Department's data collection and sharing policies outlined in the DOT Public Access Plan at: <https://www.transportation.gov/mission/open/official-dot-public-access-plan-v11>. Recipients are required to include these obligations in any sub-awards or other related funding agreements.

Public Data Access requirements include developing a Data Management Plan (DMP) and submitting the DMP for FTA review. A DMP is a document that describes how recipients plan to handle digital datasets, software, or code generated over the course of a research project pursuant to federal and Departmental requirements. A DMP must be provided as a condition of receiving FTA funds under the Section 5312 Research Program and should adequately identify: (1) the data to be collected, (2) how the data will further the goals of this effort, (3) how the data will be made accessible, and (4) how the data will be stored. DMPs can be updated over time if the scope of the project or the type of data that will be collected changes.

FTA staff is available to assist recipients with complying with public data access requirements.

g. External Communications

Recipients must communicate with their FTA Project Manager prior to engaging in any external communications regarding their project. This includes any work developing news or magazine stories with media organizations, including print, video, online, or otherwise. Additionally, the FTA project manager must be notified if project information, including results and metrics, will be shared during a webinar or other presentation open to the public produced either by the recipient itself or another organization. Recipients should consult with their FTA Project Manager at the beginning of their agreement to discuss and plan any external communications about their project.

h. Independent Evaluation

Projects funded under this announcement will be subject to evaluation by an independent evaluator selected by FTA. Recipients will be required to coordinate with the independent evaluator to assist in developing an evaluation plan and collecting, storing and managing data required to fulfill that evaluation plan.

i. Mobility Metrics

Projects funded under this notice will be required to support the efforts of FTA or its designee to evaluate the project and its outcomes against mobility-specific metrics. FTA will work with the project team to implement evaluation plans that are consistent with FTA's mobility-specific metrics as detailed in the FTA report, Mobility Performance Metrics (MPM) For Integrated Mobility and Beyond (February 2020), available at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/research-innovation/147791/mobility-performance-metrics-integrated-mobility-and-beyond-fta-report-no-0152.pdf>

j. Software Provisions

Any software developed as a part of this solicitation will be subject to provisions of FTA's Master Agreement (version 28, February 9, 2021) and evaluated for the potential to be shared for use by public transportation agencies.

3. Reporting

Post-award reporting requirements include the electronic submission of Federal Financial Reports and Milestone Progress Reports in FTA's electronic grants management system.

Applicants should include any goals, targets, and indicators referenced in their application in the Executive Summary of the TrAMS application.

As part of completing the annual certifications and assurances required of FTA grant recipients, a successful applicant must report on the suspension or debarment status of itself and its principals. If the award recipient's active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceed \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of an award made pursuant to this Notice, the recipient must comply with the Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters reporting requirements described in Appendix XII to 2 CFR part 200.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For further information concerning this notice, please contact Christina Gikakis, in the FTA Office of Mobility Innovation, by phone at 202-366-2637, or by e-mail at christina.gikakis@dot.gov. A TDD is available for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing at 800-877-8339. In addition, FTA will post answers to questions and requests for clarifications on FTA's website at <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/EMI>. To ensure applicants receive accurate information about eligibility or the program, applicants are encouraged to contact FTA directly, rather than through intermediaries or third parties, with questions. FTA staff may also conduct briefings on the FY 2021 competitive grants selection and award process upon request.

For issues with GRANTS.GOV, please contact GRANTS.GOV by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or by e-mail at support@grants.gov.

H. Other Information

This program is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

Nuria I. Fernandez,
Administrator.

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